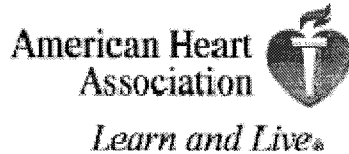


Exhibit No. 2Date 3-23-09Bill No. HB 85

1065 Joslyn St. ° Helena, Montana 59601

(406) 443-6515 ° cliff.christian@heart.org

3/23/2009

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, my name is Cliff Christian and I represent the American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association. We are here today to strongly support HB 85. It's the absolute right thing to do to support Montana's approximate 2500 volunteer licensed emergency medical technicians (EMT) who service more than 48 of our 56 counties.

The mission of the American Heart and Stroke Associations is to reduce cardiovascular disease.

Today, cardiovascular disease is a leading cause of death among adults. We, estimate sudden cardiac arrest is responsible for about 250 000 out-of-hospital deaths annually in the United States. So, we have a strong interest in helping to improve any modifiable cardiovascular risk or healthcare systems targeted to reducing death and disability from cardiovascular disease.

Heart disease and stroke are the second and fourth leading causes of death here in Montana. The latest available heart and stroke statistics (2005 stats) show almost one-third of all deaths in Montana are attributable to cardiovascular disease. In fact, annually, CVD caused 2,538 deaths among Montanans, 1,842 deaths from heart disease, 521 deaths from stroke and 175 from other CVD (2005 stats). We don't know how many deaths were averted through early intervention by citizens using CPR or an available AED; and it's not possible to calculate how many more deaths would have been attributable to cardiovascular disease had it not been for the courageous actions of Montana's licensed emergency medical technicians intervening. Suffice it to say we could easily surpass 3,000 deaths annually without these interventions. But, we can do better.

62% (620,000) of our population lives in one of eight counties. The remaining 38% (380,000) live in rural and frontier Counties. Those who live in one of the eight have the services of full time, emergency medical technicians to quickly draw upon for health emergencies. The other 380,000 Montanans that live in rural areas and those travelling through, recreating, hunting or working in our rural frontier counties rely almost exclusively on a system of volunteer emergency medical technicians to help in a health crisis. According the Legislative Auditor's office there were 72,382 nine one-one (911) related EMS incidents in 2006: 43% of these calls

were in rural or Super-rural areas where the volunteer EMTs work. That means over 31,000 911 emergencies were responded to by Montana's volunteer EMTs. Just imagine the cost to the taxpayers if these calls had been answered by salaried EMT employees from the county or town where the incidents occurred? It would be enormous.

Webster's dictionary describes a hero as: "a person admired for his or her achievements and noble qualities; one who shows great courage."

- Like an emergency medical technician who revives a drowning victim.
- An EMT who prevents a person from freezing to death trapped in a winter storm.
- A licensed emergency medical technician who administers care to a child critically injured in an auto accident.

We believe all licensed EMTs meet Webster's definition of a hero. These are our neighbors, our co-workers, our friends and family members who serve. And, according to the Legislative Auditors, 53% of these licensed EMTs are volunteers in our Montana communities working with no salaries or benefits.

HB 85, if enacted, will finally provide the volunteer EMS units (*that according to the Legislative Auditor comprise 73% of all units in Montana*) with a stable funding source for the replacement of equipment. Volunteer fire services in Montana have a fairly stable funding source from which they can replace vital equipment on an emergency basis. But that is not the case with our volunteer EMS. Volunteer EMS units have absolutely no consistent funding source to replace a blown engine on an ambulance or to purchase life-saving equipment, that for many reasons, my become depleted, or unusable. Sometimes they can "sweet-talk" a governmental entity and receive some assistance; other times, if they hit the right cycle, Homeland Security and/or a FEMA subsidiary may come through with the money to buy the emergency equipment. But, at best, these funding sources are sporadic and unreliable for the purchase of EMS equipment

If our volunteer EMTs are to continue to serve this State adequately; to continue their life-saving missions, we, as a State must do better. We need to institute a series of volunteer EMT recruitment and retention plans and we must find a consistent funding source for these volunteer units to secure the life-saving equipment to do their jobs.

HB 85 requests funds from the Department of Transportation's non restricted account be used for the purpose of providing equipment grant money. This proposed fund does not provide routine operational money – only matching funds to purchase equipment on an emergency basis and only after a thorough review by a Grant Committee and the Department of Transportation.

It's the right thing to do.

The State Department of Transportation is charged by the Federal government when it receives its funding, to mitigate the human and economic consequences of traffic crashes. In his letter to Montanans dated 9-20-06, DOT Director Jim Lynch states, "It will take the committed and sustained efforts of partners in every level of government, tribal governments, in the private sector, and in the 'four E's' of engineering, enforcement education and emergency response – all working together – to achieve success." We could not agree more. HB 85 simply requests

the DOT step up to the plate and participate fully in Montana's EMS system by providing just 10% of the non-restricted funds out of the approximately \$10 million in that account.

The DOT in its **Goals of the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan and the CHSP Planning Process** needs to (In their words) "Develop an effective and Integrated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) delivery system" (page two, bullet 9). And to further quote from the **Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan**:

"Emphasis Area #9. Emergency Medical Services Delivery (CHSP; page 5, sub #9)

CHSP Strategies:

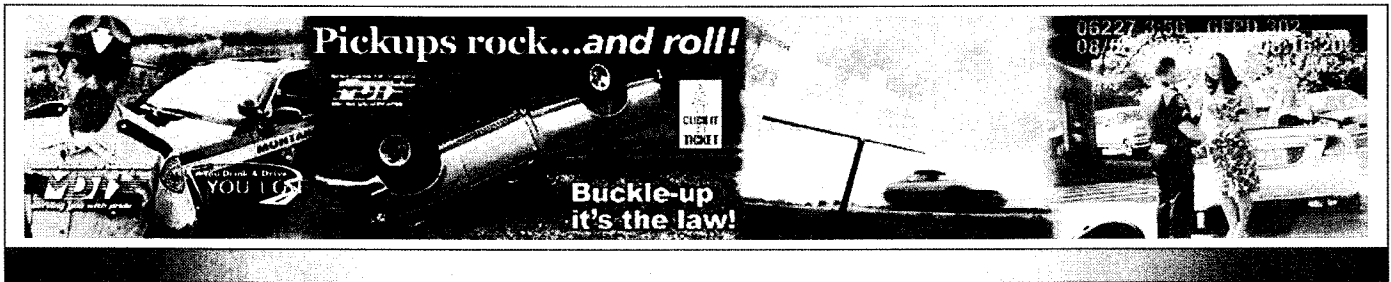
- 1. Establish EMS Legislation and Regulation.**
- 2. Provide EMS funding.**
- 3. Enhance Capabilities for Medical Response to Disaster**
- 4. Expand EMS Human Resources.**
- 5. Enhance EMS Education System.**
- 6. Expand EMS Services.**
- 7. Facilitate EMS communications.**
- 8. Conduct EMS Public Education and Information Programs"**

DOT does and outstanding job of working on and improving our highway infrastructure and I'm sure no one wants to materially reduce their effectiveness. HB 85 simply begins the process, instituted by the DOT, to adopt priority measures to assist EMS in Montana. HB 85 is the right way to go.

We also believe that because the President-elect's billion dollar infrastructure plan to rebuild our highway system is eminent, there is no better time than now to establish this new system to provide a consistent funding source for 73% of Montana's EMS system. DOT will soon have a major new funding source and, hopefully, with your concurrence in the passage of House Bill 85, Montana will be able to finally provide a stable funding source that will allow our volunteer EMTs to continue their life-saving missions to get the job done.

Thank you.

Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan



State of Montana Department of Transportation

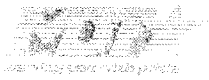
in cooperation with:

Federal Highway Administration
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
Blackfeet Tribe
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
Crow Tribe
Chippewa Cree Tribe
Little Shell Tribe
Northern Cheyenne Tribe
Fort Peck Tribes
Montana Highway Patrol
Montana Motor Vehicle Division
Montana Office of Public Instruction
Montana Department of Justice
Office of the Court Administrator
Federal Motor Carrier Administration
Montana Metropolitan Planning Organizations
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

prepared by:

Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

September 2006



Montana Department of Transportation

2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 261001
Helena MT 59620-1001

Jim Lynch, Director
Brian Schweitzer, Governor

Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan

September 2006

To the citizens of Montana:

I am pleased to present to you the Montana Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP). This is a plan for all of Montana's residents because it will take us all to solve the large and enduring problems of highway safety in our great State.

The human and economic costs of traffic crashes are predictable, preventable, unaffordable, and unacceptable. It will take the committed and sustained efforts of partners in every level of government, tribal governments, in the private sector, and in the "four E's" of engineering, enforcement, education, and emergency response - all working together -- to achieve success.

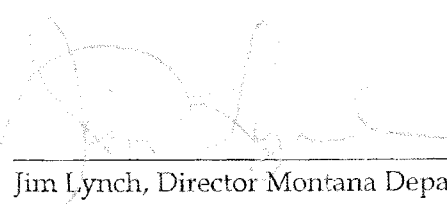
The CHSP was prepared in compliance with the requirements of SAFETEA-LU, the Federal transportation legislation. It contains implementation strategies and a plan for measuring and monitoring progress toward achieving the goals of the plan. It will be important for today's CHSP leadership teams to continue their stewardship during the implementation period, enhancing coordination of goals and objectives with safety partner plans around the state so that safety resources and activities throughout Montana are focused on those safety problems where the opportunity for improvement is greatest.

The CHSP should be considered more than a plan. It should be considered a call to action. I encourage you to become involved in the implementation of this important effort. More importantly, I encourage you to do your part - drive sober, buckle up, slow down, and pay attention to your driving. These strategies alone will do more than move numbers toward a safer Montana, it will save lives.

As the Governor's designee, I approve Montana's Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan.

Approved

9/20/06
Date


Jim Lynch, Director Montana Department of Transportation

Emphasis Area #9. Emergency Medical Services Delivery

Objective: Develop an effective and integrated Emergency Medical Services (EMS) delivery system.

Performance Measures

- Implementation of CHSP EMS strategies.
- Implementation of EMS strategies contained in Montana EMS System Plan.

Although Emergency Medical Services do not affect the number of crashes, they play a critical role in addressing the results of crashes. EMS providers face particularly challenging conditions within Montana due to the size of the coverage areas, distances from dispatching and treatment facilities, and severe weather conditions during winter months. In addition to these issues, the system is experiencing a shrinking number of volunteers and problems specific to rural areas such as lack of training opportunities and inadequate communications systems. The recent Traffic Records Assessment conducted by the NHTSA assessment team also noted the lack of a statewide EMS/Trauma data collection system.

CHSP Strategies

1. Establish EMS Legislation and Regulation

Provide legislation and regulation to adequately support the EMS System. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services

2. Provide EMS Funding

Provide stable funding to adequately support the EMS System. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services

3. Enhance Capabilities for Medical Response to Disaster

Minimize death, suffering and long-term medical effects from disasters and other mass casualty events through planning, knowledge of system resources and coordination of the medical response.

- Develop a statewide disaster response and mutual aid system for medical events.
- Develop an electronic resource and disaster management system. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

4. Expand EMS Human Resources

Ensure qualified, knowledgeable, and skilled emergency medical services personnel are available in sufficient numbers throughout the State.

- Assess alternate training strategies to enable more accessible EMS courses.
- Assess and implement alternate training strategies to enable more accessible EMT education.
- Assess and implement strategies to enable other healthcare providers to help meet prehospital workforce issue. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

5. Enhance EMS Education System

Ensure qualified, knowledgeable, and skilled emergency medical services personnel are available in sufficient numbers throughout the State.

- Assess alternate training strategies to enable more accessible EMS courses.
- Assess and implement alternate training strategies to enable more accessible EMT education. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

6. Expand EMS Services

Ensure that Emergency Medical Services personnel and equipment are delivered to the scene in a safe and timely manner; and, as necessary, patients are transported at an appropriate level of care to and between appropriate facilities.

- Implement emergency vehicle operator education.
- Develop and implement a performance improvement-based EMS service inspection and technical assistance process.
- Assess solutions to patient transportation issues, especially for interfacility transports. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

7. Facilitate EMS Communications

Provide for a communications system that encompasses public access to EMS, interagency communications, medical control and coordination of resources.

- Develop an EMS Communications Plan to guide development and implementation of EMS communications. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

8. Conduct EMS Public Education and Information Programs

Increase public awareness of the role of Emergency Medical Services, the appropriate means to access and utilize the system, and effective ways to prevent injury and acute illness.

- Develop and implement EMS service PI&E programs for recruitment and retention.
- Develop and distribute public PI&E programs to support EMS systems. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

9. Conduct Injury Prevention Public Awareness Efforts

Increase public awareness of the role of Emergency Medical Services, the appropriate means to access and utilize the system, and effective ways to prevent injury and acute illness. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

10. Enhance Medical Direction

Assure physicians are consistently involved and provide leadership at all levels of the EMS system.

- Develop strategies to support medical director education.
- Develop strategies to recruit and retain medical directors. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education

11. Provide Enhanced Trauma System and Facilities

Provide a quality, effective system of trauma care and injury prevention integrated with the overall EMS system. Assure that patient needs are identified early and transfer to an appropriate level of care is accomplished in a timely manner. Evaluate how to facilitate better integration of the EMS and trauma systems. (Montana EMS System Plan and Montana Trauma System Plan)

Safety Factor(s) Addressed: Emergency Services, Education, Data Management

12. Establish an EMS Information System

Provide for a comprehensive data collection and information systems to enable system evaluation and performance improvement. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety factor(s) addressed: Emergency Services, Education, Data Management

13. Evaluate and Monitor EMS Programs

Provide for a comprehensive quality management program that improves planning, implementation and monitoring of a statewide EMS system. (Montana EMS System Plan)

Safety factor(s) addressed: Emergency Services, Education, Data Management